

THE CONDOR

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Number 1



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THE CALIFORNIA VULTURE
Gymnogyps californianus
Drawn by Louis Agassiz Fuertes

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Bird Life among the Galapagos Islands

BY R. H. BECK

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

WHILE looking at the chart today to see how far we were from San Francisco I happened to compare our position, Latitude $19^{\circ} 24'$ N., Long. $116^{\circ} 12'$ W., with that of last year on the 19th of July and found that we were within five miles of our noon position on that date. We were then returning from the Galapagos Islands and the word Galapagos brought to mind a half promise I had made (wasn't it last January?) that some day when not too busy I would write a note or two about the trip. Today I can hardly claim to be too busy, tho there are three boobies lying on the table waiting to be skinned. They can wait till tomorrow.

To the bird collector who is accustomed to the comparative wildness of most California birds, the Galapagos Islands provide an interesting change in the curiosity, and disregard for man, of their feathered inhabitants. To the 'camerist' who has been used to spending hours and sometimes days trying to photograph a mocking bird on its nest, the unusual opportunities that here present themselves for bird photography are to be long remembered with pleasure. I call to mind now my troubles on Tower Island in getting a picture of a *Nesomimus bauri* at her nest. No sooner had I placed the camera in position and waited a moment for the frolicsome parent to get properly stationed than up flew two more mockers who proceeded to investigate the camera and incidentally the nest of their neighbor. Of course this intrusion was not to be allowed by any bird of spirit so I had to wait while she, with the assistance of her spouse, who had been busy chasing off an impudent *Geospiza pachyryncha*, cleared their tree of the intruders. She then kindly consented to my wishes and after posing in several positions I selected one that

displayed her to good advantage and pressed the bulb. Another occasion I must always remember with keenest regret was when the presence of a Baur mocker should have afforded a couple of extremely interesting photographs. The story runs like this. After spending a forenoon tramping over the piled up lava and obtaining various photographs, I reached the cliff above the beach where our boat was waiting. As I sprang across a chasm a night heron jumped from a well built nest and stood on a limb of the tree squawking at me. Seeing a chance to get bird, eggs and nest on one plate the opportunity was eagerly grasped. But much to my disappointment after I had moved up closer for the third time and was beautifully situated for a picture, the bird deliberately hopped down and walked away. A nearby mocker however, seeing my evident anxiety, came to the rescue, and dropping down into the nest commenced picking at the eggs! This would have made a good picture, and I was only eight feet away, but the heron, seeing the impudence of *Nesomimus*, threw fear of the camera to the winds and stepping back to the edge of the nest afforded me the exquisite pleasure of pressing the bulb just as she was making a stealthy poke at the intent mocker. This was so



NE SOMIMUS BAURI, TOWER ISLAND

fine a subject, that I changed the camera slightly, focused carefully, rapidly slid in the plate-holder, yanked out the slide and obtained a view of heron and mocker fighting, on the same plate with the first picture! I finally managed to get another view showing the mocker still in the nest with the heron in the background.^a

Most of the small birds belong to the genera *Geospiza* or *Certhidea*, and as they build domed nests the birds are usually concealed from view while nesting. Of the other three or four genera, *Myiarchus* builds in cavities of trees and *Dendroica* so high up on slender limbs that photographing the nest is difficult. *Pyrocephalus*, the handsome little flycatcher, builds a pretty nest and can easily be photographed on it whenever it is within reach.

But when one starts on the water birds, subjects inexhaustible are ever present, and pictures without number can be secured showing bird life in all phases. The bird affording the greatest variety of poses and nesting situations is the Neboux booby (*Sula nebouxii*). We were greatly surprised on Daphne Island to

^a See *Bird Lore*, Dec., 1903 for this picture.—E.P.

find down in the sandy bed of an old crater a nesting colony of these boobies. The air was extremely hot, and numerous skeletons scattered about showed a heavy mortality from some cause, possibly the heat; but more than likely they were of young birds, whose parents had ceased to feed them, and which were unable to rise out of the crater. So steep are the sides that the birds usually have to circle around in the crater several times before they can fly out. On Brattle Island, which is nothing but the rocky north side of an old crater, Neboux boobies nest in the sandy spots on top of the ridge, 900 feet high, where the wind keeps them cool during the nesting season. At Tagus Cove, Albemarle Island, we find them with still different surroundings. Here they nest on narrow ledges on the cliffs a few feet above the water. We rowed over to a small colony one morning and I secured a few pictures at close range. In fact it was necessarily very close for it



VARIEGATED BOOBIES AND FRIGATE BIRD

was all I could do to maintain my balance on the sliding rocks while I focused on the sitting birds. Matters were further complicated by an irate female, sitting just behind me, who wanted to puncture my legs every time I moved an inch or two in her direction. And this reminds me: to all picture-takers who contemplate visiting the Galapagos Islands I would strongly recommend the purchase of a good brand of cast-iron leggins. From my experience of three trips I am convinced they will be just the thing. They will save lots of bad words and tempers caused by unseen cactus spines that are always in ambush for the unwary, and I can testify that on more than one occasion they would have saved me from some awful scars that frigate birds, boobies, and iguanas have given me. But to return to our Neboux boobies. The amorous love song of the male is uttered in a spread eagle attitude that may cause the photographer to titter, but even so, I hope some

one will take the time to snap it in several different poses for I intend to mount one in that attitude some day and will need photographic evidence that it is not a purely theoretical position. The manner in which he lifts his feet and puts them down in the same place, with swaying, downcast head and a suggestion of being a bold, bad individual is worthy of prolonged effort to reproduce. Another excellent subject is a large flock of Neboux boobies diving in unison for fish. This picture can be easily obtained on a little bay in Albemarle Island and I shall always be sorry that limited time prevented me from getting it while we were anchored there.

The variegated booby, a larger bird than *Sula nebouxii* is an easy subject for the photographer as it nests usually on the edge of high cliffs above the ocean. Sometimes a refractory bird proves obdurate and leaves much to be guessed at in the picture, but often the expenditure of a little time and patience yields abundant fruit. I recall one instance when I wanted a picture showing different ages and plumages. The half grown booby that I wanted particularly with a pleasant expression on his face, was very troublesome. After getting the camera placed and



NEOUX BOOBY

properly focused showing an old bird and her downy young I started to pose the youngster who didn't want his picture 'took.' I fussed and fumed while he continually hopped and moved around everywhere but the right place. Once he got too near the old lady on the nest and she proceeded to chastise him in a manner that afforded me infinite satisfaction. After being thoroughly mauled by her he managed to struggle up on his perch but even then he disdained to turn his face toward the camera and I had to take the back of his head. During the fracas the camera was slightly moved and failed to get in the whole of an interested frigate bird that I wished to show owing to her proximity to the nesting booby. The young booby being fed is a subject I did not get, the camera always being on shipboard when I saw the process, but still better than this will be the picture of an old pelican feeding its two or three young. Perhaps some one in America has already obtained pictures of this seemingly suicidal operation for the pelican is much commoner there than in the Galapagos.

Webster boobies (*Sula websteri*) nest entirely in bushes and trees on the Galapagos Islands and pictures showing all phases of their life are readily obtained. An

interesting feature regarding these boobies is the coloration of the adult birds. In the Galapagos nineteen out of twenty of the breeding birds are of the grayish type while in the Revillagigedo Islands, about 1200 miles northwest, ninety-nine out of a hundred are of the white type.

Frigate birds which breed commonly on many of the outlying rocks and small islands offer many views worthy of reproduction. Nests are placed on the ground or in bushes and the absence of fear in this species renders photography an easy task. The actions of the frigates during the nesting season afforded me much amusement. Imagine one of those great, ungainly birds sitting on the nest by his mate, one wing thrown lovingly over her back, while he rubs his bill against hers, and utters low beseeching requests for her to notice him. I will say for the female I saw, that she seemed quite bored by his attentions during the time they were under observation! The manner in which a female will unceremoniously



FRIGATE BIRDS ON NEST, BRATTLE ISLAND

hustle her partner off the nest when she returns from her morning exercise is highly edifying. It is quite possible that the poor henpecked fellow sometimes resents her harsh greeting and pulls the egg from the nest in pure spite. We found eggs very often on the edge of the nest or on the ground nearby, and it would be an easy matter for a bird to pull the egg off the nest as it is flat on top and the egg is held between the feet. I am tempted to think that polyandry is practiced by these birds for more than once when the male was scared from a nest on which a female was sitting, another male would swoop down and settle in his place. When a nest is once started one bird must remain on it all the time for the moment it is left unprotected, males from surrounding nests fly to it and carry off the sticks, so that in a few minutes time not a vestige of a structure remains. The young frigate birds grow slowly and occupy the nest for a long time, sitting on it in a dejected attitude that reminds one of a sick chicken.

The red-billed tropic birds (*Phaethon aethereus*) which nest on a few of the islands interested me greatly. Their flight and call as they wheeled and darted about the high cliffs closely resembled that of the white throated swifts in California. On Daphne Island where they were common, several of their nests were in small caves in the sandstone cliffs, being quite similar to the nests of duck hawks in the islands along the Lower California coast. Usually they select some crevice among the loose rocks for a nest, altho on San Benedicto Island of the Revillagigedos very often a burrow of the wedge-tailed shearwater is used. In this section of the world the tropic bird wanders as far away from land as the frigate bird. We found both this species and the red-tailed tropic bird more than 600 miles from any island.

The flamingo is one of the birds that can be photographed at close range in the Galapagos but the day I discovered this fact, the camera was on shipboard and we had not time to return for it. It seems that the flight feathers of the flamingo are



CALIFORNIA BROWN PELICAN ON NEST

moulted all at once, for four of the birds obtained that day had not a single one of the old primaries in their wings and the new feathers were just starting. On a former occasion when I attempted to photograph a group of five birds my haste in trying to reach a favorable spot scared them, but as they rose twenty yards away I threw up the camera and pressed the bulb before the camera was steady. The resulting picture is ten long streaks where the legs dangled across the plate and a confused blur showing in place of the bodies.

When one has to back away from a flock of teal to get a fair shot, and then cannot obtain it because the birds run along the beach and swim in the water toward him you have an idea of the tameness of the birds. When this happened to me the first time I was short of cartridges and wanted to get several birds at a shot, but when the whole flock started toward me both on land and water to see what strange thing was approaching I concluded we could dispense with ducks for that day and left them as unafraid as before. Often after that on approaching

the edge of a small pond or lagoon the teal would swim up within a few feet, the males uttering their soft we-u we-u as they jealously guarded their mates from the advances of a rival.

I have made no mention of the shearwaters, penguins, gulls, terns, or oyster-catchers but all of these are tame and I have pictures of each in their favorite attitudes. The petrels, even, that nest on one of the islands seem not to have the usual fear of their kind for they fly about and enter their nests by day as well as by night. To stand on a high cliff above the ocean and watch a great flock of petrels darting about you like a swarm of bees, with the pungent smell of their oil in the nostrils, and the muffled tuc, tuc, tucoo, tucoo of many shearwaters rising out of the cracks in the lava underfoot, while beautiful gulls and harsh-voiced boobies and frigate birds join in resenting your intrusion upon a spot where man never stood before, is a pleasure that more than offsets the scratches received in getting there. And the albatrosses! What fun it was to watch them at their peculiar fencing exercise. To see a big albatross walk up to another big fellow with all the swagger of a Bowery tough and bow to him as ceremoniously and gravely as a prime minister could, and then to see them fence with their bills as rapidly as do swordsmen with light rapiers, is a sight I will never forget. Nor will I soon forget the old rascal, who came for me on the dead run and who, if I had not luckily cracked him on the head with the butt of my collecting pistol, would have lunged his powerful beak half way through me. An odd fact about the albatrosses is the direction of their flight from the island. They fly straight out to the southward and none are seen about the north side of the island nor about any of the other islands. We were on the island two days before we found them tho the island is not more than four miles across and there were hundreds of the birds.

There are numerous other things to amuse and interest the visitor to this isolated group of islands. From the little fiddler crabs that suddenly disappear before one's eyes on the beach to the flaming volcano that as suddenly appears on the mountain top, there is something to observe continually. Tho I have been there three times, I hope to make yet another trip to those isles where the turtle sleeps unmolested on the beach, and the bark of a seal or the weird cry of a far-away penguin are the last sounds of the night one hears as he drops into grateful slumber.

Lat. $19^{\circ} 24'$ N., Long. $116^{\circ} 12'$ W., July 10, 1903.



RED-BILLED TROPIC BIRD AND NEST

Afield at Flathead

BY P. M. SOLLOWAY

ON the morning of my arrival at the University of Montana Biological Station at Bigfork, head of Flathead Lake, the presence of the long-tailed chat (*Icteria virens longicauda*) was attested by its characteristic calls in the bush. The Station is at least seventy miles north of Selish, where I last observed this species. It appears that this chat is working its way northward in the Rocky Mountain region of Montana, and instead of limiting its range to southern Montana, we are safe in expecting its occurrence in suitable localities throughout the north-western part of the state.

My collecting all the eggs (seven sets) in a small colony of the Holboell grebe (*Columbus holbælli*) at Swan Lake last season was severely criticized. My actions were compared to those of the professional plume hunter, and I was accused of leaving a "devastated bird colony" in my wake. This criticism caused me to undertake a second visit to Swan Lake this season for the purpose of determining the approximate effects of my collecting upon the aggregate grebe life of the swamp at that place, and at considerable personal expense I organized another expedition to that locality. In my defense I claimed that my operations in the swamp would have but little effect upon the outcome in the aggregate. I give my notes for 1903 for what they are worth, believing that they will augment the fast accumulating mass of evidence to show that there is no occasion for misunderstanding between the conscientious oologist and the zealous bird protectionist.

On June 18, three nests of the Holboell grebe were found, two of five eggs each, and one of four, all covered and apparently partially incubated. Also a nest containing one fresh egg. On June 19, another nest was found containing one fresh egg. The foregoing data show that at least five pairs were nesting in the swamp, as many as were nesting in the preceding season. On June 22, a nest was found containing five eggs, covered, and apparently quite advanced in incubation. Hence at one time the swamp contained six nests, three with five eggs each, one with four eggs, and two with two eggs each. It is evident that the balance of grebe life in this colony was not greatly disturbed by my collecting of 1902, and as many grebes were cackling in the tangle in 1903 as were tenanting the swamp in 1902. The balance of bird life in nature is a mysterious fact. Why the same number of individuals or thereabout, will be found in the same area year after year, regardless of the natural increase or decrease, is an inexplicable matter. It is needless to say that in neither season did we kill any of the grebes, our depredations being limited to despoiling the nests as recorded.

The Townsend warbler attracted my attention this season by its abundance. I had regarded this warbler as rather uncommon in the Flathead region, but this season it appeared to outrank any other warbler in numbers. During June, after our arrival, its song could be heard at all hours of the day. The warbler frequented the larger trees, such as tamarack and Douglas spruce, singing from a station above the middle of such a tree. The song resembles the syllables, "Reet, reet, reet, reet-er, ee-zee," and can easily be identified by the regular ending "ee-zee," in which the "ee" is accented and prolonged. The first week of July was rainy and chilly, and after that time I heard no more of the singing of this warbler.

On June 15 I found a nest of the Townsend warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*). It was in a clump of small fir trees on a rocky ridge formed by a "fault" near the

lake shore, 2,950 altitude. The nest was six feet from the ground, in a small fir surrounded by larger ones, so that the site was completely screened from passing view. The nest was made beside the main stem, situated like that of a chipping sparrow's, which it greatly resembled. It was made externally of coarse weed-stems and grasses, and was lined with finer grasses and horsehair. The cavity was two inches in diameter, and one and three-eighths inches deep. There were five young nearly fledged, showing the black crown and yellow superciliary line, and dull wing-bands. All the younglings were infested with a parasitic grub, which had eaten a hole in the skull or upper part of the neck behind, and their wriggling forms could be seen in the skull or other cavity, from which it appeared that the parasite had eaten the entire contents, though the youngsters were energetically stretching forth their heads for food at the approach of the industrious parents. The male was most active in bringing food to the nest, and he was secured with little difficulty. The female was shyer, and I could capture her only after long (and impatient) waiting. (I shall be glad to send specimens of this parasite to any person who may be investigating this subject).

The cedar waxwing is reputed to be lacking in vocal powers, except the faint lisping call and such variations of it as are possible in bird language. This summer for the first time I heard a cedar waxwing (*Ampelis cedrorum*) utter another cry, showing that it can give forth abundant sound should occasion ever require. The waxwing is especially numerous in this portion of the Flathead region, and desiring a skin for the collection, I sallied out one evening before dusk with my little collecting gun. Two waxwings were sitting near each other on a lower branch of a fir, about twenty feet from the ground. They were evidently courting. He would sidle over to her, rub his breast against hers, rub his bill caressingly upon hers, and then sidle back to his former place. Then the other bird would go through a similar performance. Disliking to kill one without the other, I tried to get both at one shot, all that my gun carried. One of the birds fell wounded. As I picked it up, it gave utterance to a loud, shrill whistling cry, a continuous piteous cry not unlike the screaming of a young robin when distressed. It is a curious fact that some birds have a peculiar cry which they use only on occasions of great fright or peril. When a long-eared owl (*Asio wilsonianus*) is chloroformed, it will utter a peculiar shrill whistle; but whoever heard this owl emit such a call in the ordinary circumstances of life? So it is with the cedar waxwing, for it is certainly capable of producing a most piercing scream when its life is sorely threatened.



NEST OF RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET

PHOTO BY PROF. M. J. ELROD

This season for the first time I found a nest of the Louisiana tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) with eggs. It was on the fourth of July. The nest was in a tall Douglas spruce, on a short branch among the lowest having vegetation. The site was twenty-five feet from the ground, on a horizontal fork, the nest being held in place by surrounding twigs. It was made of coarse forked twigs as an outer framework, the walls being made of fine rootlets, and the lining of horsehair. The cavity was two and three-fourths inches in diameter, and one and one half inches deep. The nest was found by watching the birds as they frequented the place, and finally seeing the female take her place on the nest. When disturbed, the female was sitting, and she remained on the nest until I was quite near it. The site was a tuft of twigs four feet from the main stem. There were four eggs, incubated 50 per cent or more. When removed from its site, the loose twigs in the outer part of the nest fell away, like that part of a grosbeak's nest.

The ruby-crowned kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) is very common in this region. In the middle of June I spent many minutes watching the birds in their movements in the tops of the medium-sized evergreens, but was unable to find any nests, probably owing to the fact that nest-building was finished and the females were sitting. The males were singing in the upper parts of the taller trees, but were extremely shy and managed to keep out of sight from the inquisitive observer. It is a queer song, beginning with two or three squeaky notes like "tsee" followed by "chir, chir, chir, whrtle, whrtle, whrtle," and several other rather indistinct notes.

At length, on July 6, I took a nest of the ruby-crowned kinglet, with both parent birds. The nest was situated about fifteen feet from the ground, near the extremity of a branch in a fir tree beside a road through the woods. The site was six feet from the main stem. The nest was saddled on an oblique twig on the under side of the branch, and was also somewhat pendent from several small twigs about which the walls were woven. The structure was four inches in diameter externally, and three inches high. The opening, which was at the top, was two and one-fourth inches wide, and the cavity was one and seven-eighths inches deep. The nest walls were made of dark green lichen, deerhair, gossamer, and bark shreds. The lining was hair, soft downy feathers, and lichen. There were eight young in the nest, ready to leave in a short time. The accompanying illustration, made from a photo by Prof. M. J. Elrod, shows the position and site of the nest.

Lewistown, Montana.

A Few Records Supplementary to Grinnell's Check-list of California Birds

BY JOSEPH MAILLARD

WHEN a list of birds of any locality appears in print it usually occurs that observers in the given area will find that they have some records and notes which are not referred to by the author of the list. This is due to several reasons. Either the observers have not realized that some particular records were worth mentioning, or the mention of certain things may have been postponed for the moment and lost sight of for the time being, or certain parties may not have

had access to all the literature published upon this locality and so not known that they have something new to bring to light. Again the author of such a list may easily have made an occasional accidental omission, especially if he have much other work to attend to, and also there may be published records of certain things which for some reason he does not deem of sufficient importance to touch upon. Realizing all this I herewith submit some records and notes, made by my brother and myself, as additional to Mr. Grinnell's "Check-list of California Birds," (Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 3) with an apology for not having published any of the more valuable ones before this, and for doing so at all as regards the minor ones which perhaps may be superfluous.

— *Brachyramphus marmoratus*. Marbled Murrelet. While Mr. Grinnell gives this bird as a "common winter visitant" we have quite a number in our collection taken on Monterey Bay in the month of July, and one in June. We also have one specimen taken on San Francisco Bay, near Tiburon, on Nov. 16th, 1895, and we have no reason to suppose that further observation will not show that quite a number come inside from the ocean at various times.

— *Stercorarius pomarinus*. Pomarine Jaeger. There are three pairs of this species in the collection of J. & J. W. M. taken on San Francisco Bay, near Alcatraz Island, on September 25th, 1900. In that year numbers were noted daily by my brother, from the Tiburon ferryboat, between September 9 and Oct. 2, when a hard storm caused them to disappear. Since then noted in greater or less numbers every fall, appearing about Sept. 1.

— *Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*. Black Tern. Breeds in overflowed regions along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. A number of nests recorded by J. and J. W. M. on latter river near Merced. Found breeding last June by Messrs. Chapman and Fuertes at Los Banos.

— *Puffinus opisthomelas*. Black-vented Shearwater. This species is given as a common summer visitant, whereas I have taken specimens on Monterey Bay in November and December, 1895, and December, 1896.

— *Puffinus griseus*. Dark-bodied Shearwater. This is also given as a summer visitant. In our collection are specimens, taken by myself on Monterey Bay, Dec. 18, 1895, and Feb. 11, 1901.

— *Chaulelasmus streperus*. Gadwall. Another breeding record of this species is that of a female and nest containing eggs taken 20 miles south of Merced, along a stream from an artesian well, near the San Joaquin River, by J. & J. W. M. on June 24, 1901.

— *Clangula americana*. American Golden-eye. We have several winter records from Paicines, San Benito Co., Cal. Rather common at that place through the winter, but mostly immature birds.

— *Clangula islandica*. Barrow Golden-eye. One specimen in our collection taken at Ross Landing, Marin Co., near the bay shore. Several have been taken by C. A. Allen at Pt. San Pedro, on the Marin bay shore, in early spring.

— *Histrionicus histrionicus*. Harlequin Duck. Flocks noted on coast at Pt. Reyes, Marin Co., in month of June.

— *Dendrocygna fulva*. Fulvous Tree-duck. Formerly seen in Marin Co., but none noted for last ten years.

— *Steganopus tricolor*. Wilson Phalarope. One specimen in our collection from West side of the Sierras, taken by C. A. Allen at Blue Canyon, June 16, 1893. Found breeding at Los Banos, June 1903, by Messrs. Chapman and Fuertes.

— *Octodromas maculata*. Pectoral Sandpiper. We have one pair of this species

taken by myself at Mill Valley Junction, near Sausalito, on Sept. 14, 1896. This should have been recorded at the time, but probably I failed to realize the paucity of records for this state.

—*Heteractitis incanus*. Wandering Tattler. The southward migration of these birds must commence very early from their breeding grounds for they are quite common at Pacific Grove, Monterey Co., in August.

—*Numenius longirostris*. Long-billed Curlew. Numbers seen, and one specimen captured by J. & J. W. M. on bank of San Joaquin river 14 miles south of Merced, in June, 1900 and 1901.

—*Arenaria morinella*. Ruddy Turnstone. *Arenaria melanocephala*. Black Turnstone. We have several specimens of these species from San Francisco Bay, taken in December and January. They appear to be quite numerous at times during the winter around the vicinity of Red Rock and the other islands between San Francisco and San Pablo Bays.

Zenaidura macroura. Mourning Dove. A small flock of this species usually may be found through the winter at San Geronimo, Marin Co., and frequently noted in winter at Paicines, San Benito Co.

Ceryle alcyon. Belted Kingfisher. This bird is numerous also along the Central California sea coast during the winter.

—*Scolecophagus carolinus*. Rusty Blackbird. We have in our collection a male bird taken by H. B. Kaeding in Amador Co., Cal., and identified by Mr. Ridgway as of this species, Dec. 15, 1895.

Carpodacus clementis. San Clemente House Finch. During four weeks collecting on Santa Cruz Island in April, 1898, I failed to find a single individual of this species, though the island was pretty well covered in my wanderings. Hence it seems that it is not always abundant on that island, to say the least. In searching for *clementis* a large number of *frontalis* were taken in the hope of finding the latter among them.

Loxia c. bendirei. Sierra Cross-bill. There are several specimens in our collection from Marin Co., taken in winter.

Spinus pinus. Pine Siskin. A few pairs breed in Marin Co. No nests taken by us, but birds have been seen on several occasions carrying material for building into the high fir trees.

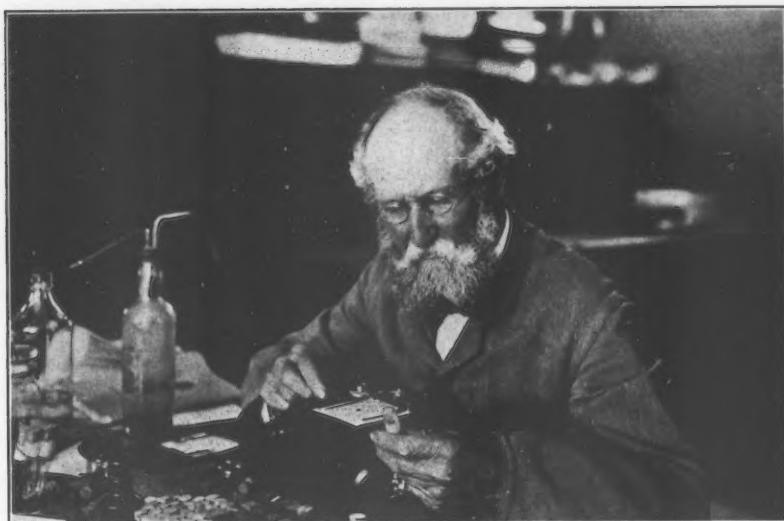
Passerculus rostratus. Large-billed Sparrow. We have one specimen from Santa Cruz, taken by G. F. Brenninger, August 27, 1895.

Phainopepla nitens. Phainopepla. Very common winter resident at Paicines, San Benito Co.

Vireo s. cassini. Cassin Vireo. Breeds regularly in small numbers at Paicines.

—*Helminthophila sordida*. Dusky Warbler. Of a number of this genus taken at Santa Barbara in April 1902, several specimens appear to be of this species. The birds were captured during a migration, apparently, as they all disappeared shortly afterward. Both *sordida* and *lutescens* were in sadly abraded plumage at the time.

Geothlypis tolmei. Tolmie Warbler. A few of these warblers breed regularly in Marin County.



PROF. F. E. L. BEAL

Few eastern ornithologists are better known to Californians than Prof. Beal, who has spent much time with us, studying in the field the relations of our common birds to agriculture and horticulture. Prof. Beal's name has long held foremost rank among the economic ornithologists of the country, and it is safe to say his papers on economic ornithology have been more potent in influencing farmers and fruit growers, than a legion of state laws. Under the auspices of the Biological Survey of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, with a corps of able assistants, he is rapidly and successfully impressing upon the minds of our practical class the relation of birds to the matter of dollars and cents.

We are much indebted to Mr. W. Otto Emerson for the opportunity of presenting this excellent portrait.

The Status of the Southern California Cactus Wren

BY HARRY S. SWARTH

In a recent review of the cactus wrens of the United States Dr. Means describes a new desert race under the name of *Heleodytes brunneicapillus anthonyi* and ascribes the birds of the coast region of southern California to the subspecies *bryanti*. Believing him to be mistaken in both statements I have been to some pains to bring together a series of cactus wrens from the regions inhabited by the two supposed varieties; and what with those in my own collection, together with specimens loaned me by different members of the Cooper Club I have had at my disposal, in all, forty-eight skins, representing the following localities: 22 from southern California (San Fernando, Pasadena, San Bernardino, and San Gorgonio

Pass), 11 from the Colorado Desert (Cohuilla Valley, Walters, New River, Pilot Knob, Cameron Lake, Vallecito, and Yuma), 13 from south-eastern Arizona (Tucson, Fort Lowell, and the Huachuca, and Santa Rita Mountains), and 2 from Sonora, Mexico. Taking these up in regular order we will first consider the birds from the coast region of southern California, which should represent the subspecies *bryanti*. In Anthony's original description of *bryanti* (Auk XI, 1894, 210) the distinguishing features of the race are not made at all clear, but from the accompanying text it is evident that one great point of difference between *bryanti* and *brunneicapillus* is that in the former all the rectrices but the middle pair are more or less perfectly barred with white, while in the latter the outer tail feathers only are barred on the inner web. Besides this striking feature Dr. Mearns ascribes to *bryanti* a back broadly striped with white.

In the series of twenty-two southern California skins before me there is just one with a perfectly barred tail. This is a juvenile male taken at San Gorgonio Pass, the edge of the desert; and I do not think that great importance can be attached to it, as the juveniles from all parts show more white markings on the tail feathers than do the adults, and in the post-juvenile moult, which takes place in September, the rectrices are lost with the rest of the juvenile plumage. Of the remainder of the series there are one or two with not even the outer feathers perfectly barred on the inner web; many of them have ill-defined spots on the second feather and one from San Bernardino has a few irregular white spots on all the feathers.

As to the striped back, supposedly diagnostic of *bryanti*, I believe it is to some extent seasonal, being more apparent in breeding birds in rather worn plumage than in autumnal specimens; but it is far more conspicuous in the desert birds at hand than in any of the California or Arizona specimens.

Passing on to the Colorado Desert birds I find in the tail feathers exactly the same markings as in specimens from the coast region; one with the inner web of even the outer feather imperfectly marked, one with some white markings on all but the middle pair, and most of them with some slight marks on the second feather. As I before remarked the desert birds show a greater tendency to longitudinal stripes on the back (these markings being more broken up in the coast specimens) but the difference is not great nor constant enough to justify any separation of the races. One specimen, a male from the Cohuilla Valley (Coll. G. F. Morcom, April 15, 1886) is noteworthy as being conspicuously paler than any other bird in the entire series. The throat is sparsely marked with black, the back has broad longitudinal white stripes and the crown is very light colored, almost chestnut, in striking contrast with the dark brown pileum of the rest of the specimens. In tail markings, however, it is like many others, the outer feathers perfectly barred, one or two white markings on the second, and just a trace of white on the third. A female in my collection taken at San Fernando, California (No. 2181, October 18, 1901) is very similar to this bird in general appearance, the only differences being due to the one being in perfectly acquired autumnal plumage, while the other has the plumage more worn and abraded.

Of the Arizona specimens, I have some from the extreme southeastern corner of the territory that are absolutely indistinguishable from others taken within a few miles of the Pacific Ocean. In the tail markings they vary exactly as specimens from the other localities do.

There is supposed to be some difference between *anthonyi* and *bryanti* in the character of the markings of the under parts, the spots in the former being smaller, more scattered, and linear in shape, while the latter is supposed to be heavily

marked with rather large, round, or ovate spots; but this seems to be purely individual variation, for I find specimens showing both character of markings in the Arizona, the desert, and the southern California series. The differences in the black throat patch are mainly seasonal. When the fall moult is completed the throat feathers, dusky at the base, then white, and with about the terminal third black, are slightly edged with grayish, producing, in birds shot up to about the end of October, a somewhat hoary effect in the otherwise black throat and upper breast. This is very soon lost, and by early spring much of the black has worn away as well, sufficiently so to expose much of the light colored portions of the feathers; so that in birds shot at this time the black is not nearly as "solid" in appearance as is the case with fall birds. In two June specimens, one from San Fernando, California, and the other from the Santa Rita Mountains, Arizona, abrasion has proceeded to such a point that the throat patch has entirely disappeared as a distinctive marking, and the two birds are practically uniformly spotted over the entire lower parts; while in the two Sonora specimens (♀ ad. and ♂ im. coll. F. Stephens, Aug. 18, 1884) the plumage is so abraded as to have lost all distinctive markings, and the lower parts are almost unmarked.

In the series of cactus wrens now before me I am quite unable to appreciate any decided pallor of coloration on the part of the desert birds as compared with specimens from the coast region; and it may be of interest to remark that the female of the two extremely pale colored birds mentioned above, and the darkest colored bird of the whole series, also a female, were shot on the same day, October 18, 1901, at the same place, near San Fernando, California.

Juveniles from all regions show great variation in markings and coloration; they are usually more or less spotted underneath, with some ochraceous on the flanks and abdomen, but one in my collection (No. 4080 ♀ juv. Santa Rita Mountains, Arizona, June 22, 1903) has the lower parts, from the throat to and including the lower tail coverts, strongly suffused with ochraceous, and, with the exception of some spots on the lower tail coverts, practically immaculate.

Bryanti as originally described was considered as intermediate both in coloration and habitat, between the Lower California *affinis* and the more northern *brunneicapillus*, and as such the race may have existence, though in southern California its habitat must be extremely restricted. None of the birds in the series I have gathered from this region are referable to that race, as I have demonstrated; and it is also apparent that, by whatever name it be called, but one recognizable variety of cactus wren occupies the region from the Pacific Coast in southern California, to, at least, eastern Arizona. Of the Texan form, *Heleodytes brunneicapillus couesi*, I cannot speak with any authority, having no specimens. *Anthonyi* is supposed to differ from both *bryanti* and *couesi* in being of paler coloration and having the lower parts less heavily spotted. There is assuredly no difference between desert birds and birds from the Pacific Coast region in these respects, and as the characters supposed to distinguish *couesi* and *bryanti* ("back narrowly striped with white, the stripes being broken up into spots; intermediate rectrices nearly all black, or slightly spotted with white") certainly habitually occur in the coast birds, the inference is that the supposed three subspecies *couesi*, *anthonyi* and *bryanti* are really one indistinguishable variety. Thus if true *brunneicapillus* proves to be a Mexican species, as appears to be the case, the cactus wrens occurring along our southern border from the Rio Grande to the Pacific will probably have to be known as *Heleodytes brunneicapillus couesi* (Sharpe); though, as I said before, a race *bryanti* may exist in the habitat ascribed to it by Anthony, though most assuredly not as defined by Dr. Mearns.

I wish here to express my thanks to Messrs. F. Stephens and G. F. Morcon for the loan of specimens from the Colorado Desert and various parts of Arizona, and to Mr. Joseph Grinnell for some additional specimens from southern California.

Birds of Fort Custer, Montana

BY EDGAR A. MEARNS

MY visit to Fort Custer was a brief one. Leaving Custer station on the Northern Pacific railroad very early on the morning of July 23, 1889, in the kind of conveyance known throughout the Army as an "ambulance," drawn by an excellent team of four mules, we reached Fort Custer (since abandoned), located on a bluff beside the Bighorn River, about noon. The rest of that day, and the one following, were chiefly spent in looking about the country; and on July 25th, towards evening, we commenced the return trip to the railroad at Custer. Following is a list of the birds observed:

Actitis macularia (Linn.). Spotted Sandpiper. One was seen on the bank of the Bighorn River.

Ægialitis vocifera (Linn.). Killdeer. Very many were seen along the streams, and on the mesa back of Fort Custer.

—*Dendragapus obscurus richardsoni* (Doug.). Richardson Grouse. I saw wings and tails of this grouse that had been brought in to the fort from a sawmill in the neighboring mountains.

—*Pediocetes phasianellus campestris* (Ridg.). Prairie Sharp-tailed Grouse. This is known as the "Willow Grouse." I saw several flocks as we drove along the Bighorn River, and shot two birds that were near the road.

Centrocercus urophasianus (Bon.). Sage Grouse. Abundant on the grassy plain back of Fort Custer. On July 24th, my host, Doctor William R. Hall, U. S. Army, took me afielid in his buckboard to shoot sage grouse. A few miles from the post the Captain's setter dog caught a half-grown one, which made a delicious meal; but, when older, the flesh is said to become tough and permeated with sage, for which reason these grouse were only shot by the officers of Fort Custer during the months of July and August. On this occasion a heavy thunder-storm drove us from the field before another covey could be found.

Zenaidura macroura (Linn.). Mourning Dove. Very abundant, especially in the heavy timber bordering the Bighorn River.

Cathartes aura (Linn.). Turkey Vulture. Abundant.

Circus hudsonius (Linn.). Marsh Hawk. Common. Seen coursing the prairie in every direction.

Buteo or *Archibuteo*. Several buzzard hawks were seen on telegraph poles at a distance. Both genera may have been represented.

Falco sparverius deserticola Mearns. Desert Sparrow Hawk. Very abundant; fluttering and hovering over one spot, searching for grasshoppers on which they were feeding. They were very fearless, allowing the ambulance to pass within a few yards of them, sometimes following it in pursuit of grasshoppers disturbed by the passing vehicle.

Speotyto cunicularia hypogaea (Bon.). Burrowing Owl. Many were seen in prairie-dog towns between Custer station and the Bighorn River. On the mesa around Fort Custer it was also numerous.

Colaptes cafer collaris (Vigors). Red-shafted Flicker. Abundant wherever there was timber.

Melanerpes erythrocephalus (Linn.). Red-headed Woodpecker. Abundant in the cottonwood timber of the river-bottoms.

—*Chordeiles virginianus sennetti* (Coues). Sennett Nighthawk. Nighthawks

were common everywhere, and especially plentiful on the *mesa* behind Fort Custer, where they were continually swooping down towards one, with a startling boom. One was shot.

Tyrannus tyrannus (Linn.). Kingbird. Common along Bighorn River.

Tyrannus verticalis Say. Arkansas Kingbird. Abundant, especially so among the cottonwoods of the Bighorn River.

Otocoris alpestris leucolæma (Coues). Pallid Horned Lark. Abundant.

Pica hudsonica Sabine. Black-billed Magpie. Some were seen among the cottonwood trees beside the Bighorn, others about the slaughtering pens. The appearance of this bird gives one an impression of length and striking contrast of colors; and its habits suggest a mixture of cunning and audacity.

Corvus corax sinuatus (Wagler). American Raven. Common. Some were extremely unsuspicious of man.

Molothrus ater (Bodd.). Cowbird. Abundant on the Bighorn River and in the post of Fort Custer.

Sturnella neglecta (Aud.). Western Meadowlark. A common species of the region, abundant on the plain around Fort Custer.

Icterus bullocki (Swain.). Bullock Oriole. Several families of them were seen in the cottonwood trees bordering the Bighorn River.

Scolecophagus cyanocephalus (Wagler). Brewer Blackbird. Abundant. As usual, flocks of these birds followed the herds, and frequented the corrals and slaughter pens as well as the timbered river-bottom.

—*Quiscalus quiscula æneus* (Ridg.). Bronzed Grackle. Flocks of these birds frequented the outskirts of Fort Custer, and the neighboring riverbanks. They seemed to have copied some of the actions of the Brewer blackbirds, such as loafing around corrals, fences and wood-ranks.

Coccothraustes vespertinus montanus (Ridg.). Western Evening Grosbeak. A small flock was seen beside the Bighorn River, near Fort Custer.

Astragalinus tristis pallidus (Mearns). Pale Goldfinch. A few were noted at Fort Custer.

Calcarius ornatus (Towns.). Chestnut-collared Longspur. At Fort Custer it is quite common.

Poecetes grammens confinis (Baird). Western Vesper Sparrow. A common species.

Chondestes grammacus strigatus (Swain.). Western Lark Sparrow. Very abundant.

Progne subis (Linn.). Purple Martin. Numerous in the timbered river bottom.

Petrochelidon lunifrons (Say). Cliff Swallow. Abundant.

Hirundo erythrogaster Bodd. Barn Swallow. Common.

Tachycineta thalassina lepida (Mearns). Northern Violet-green Swallow. Abundant along the bluff bank of the Bighorn River.

Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides (Swain.). White-rumped Shrike. Common.

Oreoscoptes montanus (Towns.). Sage Thrasher. Common.

—*Toxostoma rufum* (Linn.). Brown Thrasher. Several were seen on the Big-horn River.

Annual Outing Meeting of the Southern Division, 1903

BY FRANK S. DAGGETT

THE 1903 outing meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club which was held October 31, November 1 and 2, will long be remembered as one of the most successful ever held by the club. This annual gathering of the clan has taken place for many years past and has become so popular there is little danger of its being overlooked in the future.

Once a year the members select a committee who in turn select a place for the gathering of the clan, and much depends upon their judgment.

Twice in the history of the club it has met on Mt. Wilson, a pine-covered ridge 5800 feet high, where kinglets, chickadees, nuthatches, white-headed woodpeckers, Sierra juncos and black-throated warblers abound. Other years found the members with blankets, camped under the oaks in the upper reaches of the Arroyo Seco canyon, where jays, dotted canyon wrens and *pallid wren-tits* enliven the scene by day, and spotted and California screech owls by night, although, as I remember it, the members did most of the whooping.

This year the committee, Howard Robertson and H. J. Lelande, made a happy hit when they selected the Salisbury ranch for a rendezvous. This ranch adjoins the sign-board station of Garnsey, on the Chatsworth branch of the Southern Pacific R. R. From its edge grain fields stretch as far as the eye can see. Ordinarily an orchard district, intruding itself into grain fields, offers to the collector and observer little beyond the common run of birds, but here the whole fauna is changed by the topography of the country. The vast water shed to the north and east, culminating in the Tejunga Wash which crosses the San Fernando valley in a series of strips of great width, carrying the underground flow of water, focusing at this point, forms the head of the Los Angeles river, with its low bottom-land and dense willows and clumps of cotton-wood, with the avifauna attracted by such an environment. From this point, north, for miles the wash gradually widens until it becomes a broad chaparral region, the resort of valley partridges black-tailed gnatcatchers, cactus wrens and thrashers. It is here that stragglers like the sage thrasher and lark bunting have been taken, in years gone by, by Swarth and others. The weed-grown grain stubble affords shelter for western savanna sparrows, western meadowlarks, western vesper sparrows, Say phoebe and burrowing owls. The orchards, with more or less fallen fruit on the ground, attract a great many red-shafted flickers, house finches, and Audubon warblers.

These outings are a crucial test of the members; while many plan for them months in advance, it is the only tried collector and enthusiast who usually responds at roll call, but it is worthy of record that every officer of the Southern Division responded to the call of his name at the meeting held October 21, 1903.

Messrs. Robertson, Lelande, Swarth, Pringle and Shinn came from Los Angeles by team, through Cahuenga Pass, Judson by rail, and Richardson with blankets strapped to handle bar covered the eighteen miles from Pasadena on wheel, and Grinnell and Daggett by rig.

During the three days in the field the territory was carefully investigated by the different members of the party who scattered in all directions at daybreak, returning in time to relate the experiences of the day over a delicious stew made from game contributed by the hunters of the party. W. B. Judson, always lucky, made the most noteworthy find, it being an adult male of Scott oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) the first specimen actually taken in Los Angeles Co., although H. S. Swarth noted a single bird many years ago. Among the other varieties was a pigeon hawk and Brewer sparrow by Daggett, and two dusky poor wills, one by Judson and one by Swarth.

Grinnell and Swarth set a line of traps for mammals and secured many odd forms, such as kangaroo rats, pocket and white-footed mice and wood rats, the wily coyote refusing to be caught but did not fail to help himself to mammals already in the traps.

In order to give an idea of the class of birds seen on an outing of this sort, I append a list of those noted by the different members, with notes.

1. VALLEY PARTRIDGE, *Lophortyx californicus vallicolus*. Plentiful in the brushy washes. The largest flock numbered about fifty.
2. MOURNING DOVE, *Zenaidura macroura*. In the middle of the day flocks of 30 to 40 hung about the cottonwoods.
3. TURKEY VULTURE, *Cathartes aura*. Half a dozen circled about on the 2nd.
4. MARSH HAWK, *Circus hudsonius*. One noted by Swarth over grain stubble.
5. WESTERN SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, *Accipiter velox rufilatus*. Several seen about head of Los Angeles river.
6. WESTERN RED-TAILED HAWK, *Buteo borealis calurus*. One seen in Eagle Rock valley. Pestered by large flock of house finches.
7. PIGEON HAWK, *Falco columbarius*. Flying between cottonwoods, where large flocks of mourning doves had gathered.
8. DESERT SPARROW HAWK, *Falco sparverius phalaena*. Several seen on telegraph poles.
9. AMERICAN LONG-EARED OWL, *Asio wilsonianus*. Flock of a dozen started from low juniper clump in Tejunga Wash by C. Richardson who secured two.
10. SHORT-EARED OWL, *Asio accipitrinus*. One started up from neglected grain field at edge of wash.
11. BURROWING OWL, *Speotyto cunicularia hypogaea*. In neglected grain field.

12. ROAD-RUNNER, *Geococcyx californianus*. Often started in grain field, edge of wash.
13. RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER, *Sphyrapicus ruber*. Two noted on pepper tree near Burbank.
14. AMERICAN BARN OWL, *Strix pratina*. Flew out of dense top of live oak.
15. RED-SHAFTED FLICKER, *Colaptes cafer collaris*. Very common in San Fernando valley, about orchards where fruit has fallen, also on ground in sycamore groves.
16. DUSKY POOR-WILL, *Phalaenoptilus nuttalli californicus*. Swarth and Judson each took specimens; started from ground in wash.
17. ANNA HUMMINGBIRD, *Calypte anna*. Common about wild tobacco, now in bloom.
18. CASSIN KINGBIRD, *Tyrannus vociferans*. One seen on telegraph wire near West Glendale.
19. SAY PHOEDE, *Sayornis saya*. In wash among scattered brush; also in neglected grain field.
20. BLACK PHOEDE, *Sayornis nigricans semipalustris*. Several noted on fences by roadside and on tree at edge of orchard.
21. CALIFORNIA HORNED-LARK, *Otocoris alpestris acdia*.
22. CALIFORNIA JAY, *Aphelocoma californica*. About scattered oaks in washes.
23. AMERICAN RAVEN, *Corvus corax sinuatus*. There is a large "crow-roost" in the willows at the head of the Los Angeles river, and quite number of ravens come in at dusk in pairs and small flocks of 4 or 5. Their larger size and croak readily distinguishes them from the crows. Judson shot one from a flock of three.
24. CALIFORNIA CROW, *Corvus americanus hesperis*. They arrive at the roost, noted above, at dusk, some going direct, while the larger flocks come in high up, dropping down in irregular curves when nearly over the trees.
25. WESTERN MEADOWLARK, *Sturnella magna neglecta*. Flocks in grain fields.
26. SCOTT ORIOLE, *Icterus parisorum*. The one taken was probably a straggler from the Great Basin and Mohave Desert region.
27. BREWER BLACKBIRD, *Scorophaenus cyanocephalus*. In large flocks about cultivated tracts, corrals, and lawns.
28. HOUSE FINCH, *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*. Gathering in large flocks outside of cultivated districts.
29. WILLOW GOLDFINCH, *Astragalinus tristis salicamans*. Several seen by roadside.
30. ARKANSAS GOLDFINCH, *Astragalinus psaltria*. On telegraph wires with flocks of house finches.
31. WESTERN VESPER SPARROW, *Pooecetes gramineus confinis*. Common on weed-grown grain fields.
32. WESTERN SAVANNA SPARROW, *Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus*. In small flocks in grain fields.
33. WESTERN LARK SPARROW, *Chondestes grammacus strigatus*. Flocks by roadside especially near dry uncultivated stretches bordering ranches.
34. INTERMEDIATE SPARROW, *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli*. Flocks everywhere in washes and cultivated ground wherever suitable shelter.
35. BREWER SPARROW, *Spizella breweri*. Only met with occasionally in chaparral-covered sections.
36. SIERRA JUNCO, *Junco hyemalis thurberi*. Small flock about cypress row near Tuluca.
37. BELL SPARROW, *Amphispiza belli*. In dry brush-covered areas in washes.
38. SAGE SPARROW, *Amphispiza belli nevadensis*. A straggler from Great Basin district.
39. SAN DIEGO SONG SPARROW, *Melospiza cinerea cooperi*. In willows, head of Los Angeles river.
40. SPURRED TOWHEE, *Pipilo maculatus megalonyx*. Common in brushy wash.
41. ANTHONY TOWHEE, *Pipilo fuscus senicula*. Common everywhere where there is sheltering hedge or brush.
42. CALIFORNIA SHRIKE, *Lanius ludovicianus gambeli*. Pretty generally scattered; in washes, on telegraph wires, and about orchards.
43. AUDUBON WARBLER, *Dendroica auduboni*. One of our common winter visitants. Almost impossible to get out of sight of one.
44. WESTERN MOCKINGBIRD, *Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*. Not in song at this date but otherwise evident.
45. PASADENA THRASHER, *Toxostoma redivivum pasadense*. Common but shy.
46. CACTUS WREN, *Heleodytes brunneicapillus*. In cactus grown places. On November 1 found two nests almost completed, birds carrying lining material.
47. ROCK WREN, *Salpinctes obsoletus*. Several seen along cut bank of wash.
48. AMERICAN PIPIT, *Anthus peusilvanicus*. A dozen seen in barley stubble west of Burbank.
49. SAN DIEGO WREN, *Thryomanes bewickii charienturus*. Common in brushy parts of wash.
50. TULE WREN, *Telmatodytes palustris paludicola*. Only one seen, in cactus grown area, a mile from water.
51. PALLID WREN-TIT, *Chamaea fasciata henshawi*. Thick brushy clumps.
52. CALIFORNIA BUSH-TIT, *Psaltriparus minimus californicus*. In flocks about oaks.
53. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, *Regulus calendula*. Saw two in roadside peppers.
54. WESTERN GNATCATCHER, *Polioptila caerulea obscura*. Large brushy clumps in wash.
55. BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER, *Polioptila californica*. Common in brush of wash.
56. DWARF HERMIT THRUSH, *Hylocichla guttata nana*. One noted in brush at head of Eagle Rock Valley and another in willows of Los Angeles river.
57. WESTERN ROBIN, *Merula migratoria propinqua*. Only one seen, flying southeast across Eagle Rock valley.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Unusual Nesting Site of the Cactus Wren.—A ten years' experience with the cactus wren (*Heleodytes b. brunneicapillus*) has left a memory of fleeting glimpses and hard approaches that characterized the attempts to get better acquainted with this wary bird. They have a way of sliding out of the nest just before one gets a glimpse of it, then appearing momentarily as they dive out of sight behind some clump of brush or tangle of cactus. If followed persistently it becomes a case of hide and seek in which the observer gets little satisfaction. I found a remarkable exception on June 27th this year (1903) when taking a camping trip into the San Gabriel canyon. The road, which crosses the San Gabriel River wash, near Azusa, is bordered by a row of poles carrying high power wires. The two cross arms, carrying twelve wires, are about thirty feet from the ground. A cactus wren had selected the lower of the arms and built a typical nest on the north or shady side of the pole, filling the whole space between it and the large insulator. The beginning of such a nest on the smooth arm would be possible only in a country remarkably free from winds, but after completion, the insulator acted as a set screw to hold it in place.

The road which this line of poles borders is the main travelled road to Pomona, San Bernardino and Redlands, and probably used more than any other long distance road in southern California. In some cases, for instance, a driver on a load of hay would be brought about face to face with this shy bird. While we hauled under the wires to investigate, the female alighted on the cross arm, with food in her bill for the young, which the nest contained.

Often birds are forced to adapt themselves to new conditions by the settlement of a country, which may destroy their natural nesting sites, but in this case there was no apparent reason, as the wash for miles contained hundreds of perfect nesting places, in cactus such as is usually chosen by the cactus wren.

That the bird sometimes does the unusual was noted in another instance, when I found a nest located in an apricot tree. It was the corner tree of an orchard which projected into a large wash, where the cactus and brush for some distance had been cleared.—FRANK S. DAGGETT, Pasadena, Cal.

Records of the Black-throated Sparrow.—So far as published records go the black-throated sparrow, *Amphispiza bilineata deserticola*, is only an accidental visitor to the Pacific slope of Los Angeles county. Joseph Grinnell records, in "Birds of the Pacific Slope of Los Angeles County," a specimen taken in the Arroyo Seco wash near Pasadena, Cal., April 10, 1897, and I learn of an unrecorded specimen taken by Harry Swarth, in the spring of 1898 in the San Fernando Valley.

On September 12, 1903, while camped by an irrigation ditch on the road between two olive orchards, near Pacoima, a station on the S. P. R. R., a mile north of the Big Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando valley. I noticed a small sparrow moving about among the weeds on the roadside. It darted into the grove as I approached, playing hide and seek behind the low spreading olive branches. It proved to be a young male of the year, with black throat patch still incomplete.—FRANK S. DAGGETT, Pasadena, Cal.

Records from the Vicinity of Watsonville, California.—The following more or less rare birds were taken or seen in the region about Watsonville, California, during the summer and autumn of 1903:

- Aythya collaris*, Oct. 19, shot; seen several times.
- Gymnogyps californianus*, seen several times in mountains on north side of Pajaro Valley.
- Elanus leucurus*, seen, but not shot, Oct. 23.
- Archibuteo ferrugineus*, observed quite often during fall.
- Falco anatum*, Oct. 3, shot.
- Coccygus americanus occidentalis*, observed in May and June along Pajaro River.
- Cotaptes auratus luteus*, shot Nov. 15.
- Phalaenoptilus nuttalli californicus*, observed Oct. 25.
- Chondestes grammacus*, Aug. 14, shot.
- Aeronotus melanoleucus*, observed in mountains on north side of valley.
- Tyrannus verticalis*, June 1, shot.
- Pica nuttalli*, Sept. 27, shot.
- Corvus americanus hesperis*, Oct. 21, shot.
- Spinus pinus*, quite abundant in September; many shot.
- Melospiza lincolni*, abundant in September and October; many shot.
- Dendroica townsendi*, common in fall; many shot.

Geothlypis tolmiei, fairly common in early September.
Wilsonia pusilla pileolata, abundant in early fall; many shot.

Mniotilla varia, Sept. 24, shot.

Minus polyglottos leucopterus, Sept. 17, shot.

Certhia familiaris occidentalis, Aug. 31, Sept. 3.—J. S. HUNTER, Berkeley, Cal.

—*Aythya collaris* in San Mateo Co., California.—The recorded occurrences of this duck in California are scarce enough to make new stations worthy of publication. An adult male was shot on the summit of the ridge north of Black Mountain (Monte Bello), about nine miles west of Stanford University, by Mr. Ernest Dudley, Nov. 26, 1903. There is yet little of the chestnut collar present.—WALTER K. FISHER.

Record of the Monterey Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla guttata slevini*).—While collecting on the Butano Creek, San Mateo Co., Calif., June 20, 1903, I came across two of these little thrushes, a male and a female adult, described by Mr. Joseph Grinnell in the *Auk* for July, 1901.

The Butano Basin is part of an untouched portion of the humid-coast forest lying between the Big Basin and Pescadero creek. Its sides which slope rather evenly but quite steeply from the creek to the ridges are covered for the most part with Douglas spruces (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*), redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), tan-bark oaks (*Quercus densiflora*), madrones (*Arbutus menziesii*), and considerable underbrush such as wild lilac (*Ceanothus thyrsifloris*), live oak (*Quercus wislizeni*), azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*), poison oak (*Rhus diversiloba*) and huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), so that with the exception of a few rocky places grown with chaparral, the sun touches the ground but in spots. Bird life is rather scarce here and although quite a number of species exist in the Basin there are but comparatively few individuals.

The first thrush captured was seen sitting on a low twig of a wild lilac bush about half way up the side of the canyon. The ground was covered with dead oak leaves and the pale-colored bird was quite inconspicuous against the background. It was uttering its low *chuck chuck* call note and seemed preparing to fly when taken. The other bird was found a few hundred yards up the slope. It slipped noiselessly along behind the fallen logs and over dead leaves and did not stop or attempt to hide but only moved rapidly on with one eye fixed keenly on the pursuer, as is characteristic with the hermit thrushes.

These were the only thrushes seen above the main creek, where the russet-back (*Hylocichla u. ustulata*) was found keeping strictly to the bed of the creek.—HUBERT O. JENKINS.

Occurrence of Scott Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) in Los Angeles Co.—At the outing meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Club, held on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1-2, 1903, in the San Fernando Valley, a number of birds were collected by the various members present, the most interesting of which was a male Scott Oriole shot by W. B. Judson on Nov. 2, and now in my collection. The bird is an adult and differs from spring males from Arizona only in that the yellow markings generally are of a darker, more greenish hue than is the case with any of the latter in my possession. Aside from the unusual locality the capture is of interest from the late date at which it occurred.—H. S. SWARTH.

The Ashy Kinglet

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL.

+ *Regulus calendula cinereaceus* new subspecies.

CHARACTERS—Similar to *Regulus calendula calendula* but larger; coloration throughout paler and grayer, less yellowish.

TYPE—♂ ad.; No. 1039, Coll. J. G.; Strain's Camp, Mt. Wilson, Los Angeles County, California; May 9, 1896; collected by J. Grinnell.

MEASUREMENTS OF TYPE (in inches)—Length 4.62; extent 7.25; wing 2.40; tail 1.96, tarsus .75; culmen .35; bill from nostril .26.

COLORATION OF TYPE.—Above pale ashy olive, becoming slightly greenish on rump; wings and tail sepia, edged with whitish; crown-patch flame-scarlet; beneath ashy-white faintly tinged with olive-buff, the latter being most evident posteriorly.

REMARKS—The two breeding birds in my collection, from the high mountains of Los Angeles county, are matched by a considerable number of winter specimens from various parts of southern California. These appear to indicate an arid mountain race of the Southwest, characterized by large size and gray coloration. Parallel geographic variants are exhibited in such genera as *Hylocichla*, *Passerella* and *Empidonax*.

THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine of Western
Ornithology

Published Bi-monthly by the Cooper Ornithological Club of California

WALTER K. FISHER, Editor, Palo Alto
JOSEPH GRINELL, Business Manager and
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R. E. SNODGRASS, Associate Editor

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EDITORIAL NOTES

It has grown to be the custom at the beginning of each year for a magazine, however modest its pretensions, to outline its 'policy' and catalog its 'special features' for the volume to come. But this year THE CONDOR will depart from the time-honored usage and will merely state that the six numbers issued during 1903 will be a sufficient guarantee for those to follow, and that if any promises remain unfulfilled these will be amply made good during 1904.

Mr. Frank S. Daggett, owing to his temporary migration to Chicago has resigned the associate editorship of THE CONDOR. The Club extends to Mr. Daggett its best wishes for a prosperous winter, and a speedy return. Mr. R. E. Snodgrass, of Stanford University, with the beginning of this volume assumes the associate editorship from the Northern Division.

We extend to Mr. Louis Agassiz Fuertes our best thanks for the drawing of the California condor, which is shown in the frontispiece of this issue.

The tenth annual meeting was held at the residence of president Henry Reed Taylor in Alameda, Saturday evening, January 9, and was one of the best attended in recent years. The election of officers resulted as follows: president, H. R. Taylor; senior vice-president, R. B. Moran; junior vice-president, Earle Muliken; treasurer, Joseph Grinnell; secretary, Chas. S. Thompson.

At the annual meeting of the southern Division held January 7, Howard Robertson was elected president, J. Eugene Law, vice-president, Harry Lelande, secretary; W. Lee Chambers, division treasurer.

Several members interested in the exchange of bird-skins and eggs, wish to bring out a new edition of Taylor's Catalog. Persons interested are invited to write their ideas of changes in value, etc., to Mr. D. A. Cohen, Alameda, Cal.

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Revised to January 1, 1904.
(Residence in California unless otherwise stated. Year following name signifies date of election.)

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 Wash.
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 Johnson, H. R., Stanford University. 1901.
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 Jordan, Dr. David Starr, Stanford Univ. 1902.
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 geles. 1894.
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 1899.
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 San Francisco. 1902.
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 1901.

- Mailliard, John W., 307 Sansome St., San Francisco. 1894.
- Mailliard, Joseph, San Geronimo, Marin County. 1895.
- Mannon, Chas. M., Ukiah. 1901.
- Mathews, Miss Ellen, 2103 Union Avenue, Los Angeles. 1901.
- McCormick, A. L., 222 Laughlin Building, Los Angeles. 1895.
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- Moran, Nathan M., Stanford University. 1896.
- Moran, R. B., Stanford University. 1897.
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- Nelson, E. W., Dept. Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 1904.
- Newkirk, Dr. Garrett, 203 S. Broadway, Los Angeles. 1900.
- Newland, Lloyd, Palo Alto, 1903.
- Newsome, Miss Jessie L., 456 25th St., Oakland. 1903.
- Noack, H. R., 936 Poplar St., Oakland, 1901.
- Osgood, Wilfred H., Dept. Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 1893.
- Owen, Virgil W., Tajo Bldg., care U. S. Dist. Court, Los Angeles. 1896.
- Palmer, Dr. E. M., Laughlin Blk., Los Angeles. 1902.
- Palmer, Dr. T. S., Dept. Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 1903.
- Pemberton, J. Roy, 553 Liberty St., San Francisco. 1900.
- Pierce, Wright M., Box 166 Claremont. 1902.
- Pleasants, Mrs. J. E., Santa Ana. 1900.
- Price, William W., Alta, Placer County. 1898.
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- Ray, Milton S., 44 Market St., San Francisco. 1899.
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- Rising, H. G., 1926 Estrella Ave., Los Angeles. 1898.
- Ritter, W. E., Univ. of Cal., Berkeley. 1901.
- Robertson, Howard, Box 55, Sta. A., Los Angeles. 1896.
- Rooney, Dr. R. F., Auburn. 1902.
- Sampson, Walter B., 36 S. California St., Stockton. 1894.
- Sampson, Will F., Deephole, Washoe Co., Nevada. 1895.
- Schneider, Fred A., Jr., Ashbury and Laurel Sts., San Jose, Cal. 1893.
- Schneider, J. J., Box 1509, Anaheim. 1899.
- Sharp, Clarence S., Escondido. 1902.
- Sharpe, Geo. H., Vacaville. 1901.
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- Snodgrass, Robt. E., Stanford Univ. 1901.
- Snyder, John O., Stanford Univ. 1900.
- Steinbeck, Wm., Sperry Flour Co., Stockton. 1897.
- Stephens, Frank, University and Filmore Sts., San Diego. 1894.
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- Swisler, Chas. A., Placerville. 1901.
- Taylor, Harry R., Box 95 Alameda. 1893.
- Taylor, Loren E., Fyffe, El Dorado Co. 1897.
- Thompson, Chas. S., Stanford Univ. 1900.
- Towne, George, Palo Alto. 1901.
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- Ward, Harold C., 723 Paru St., Alameda. 1894.
- Warren, E. V., Pacific Grove. 1899.
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- Williams, John J., San Ysidro Ranch, Santa Barbara. 1900.
- Wilson, Mrs. A. J., 716 N. Mentor St., Pasadena. 1900.
- Wilson, Joseph Elmer, 1921 Alameda Ave., Alameda. 1903.
- Wood, C. H., 159 S. Orange Grove Avenue, Pasadena. 1895.
- Wright, Foster C., City Hall, Los Angeles. 1903.
- Wueste, R. C., 5th and Brooke Sts., San Diego. 1901.
- Zschokke, A. J., 2305 Clinton St., Alameda. 1897.
- Zschokke, Theodore C., Palo Alto. 1903.

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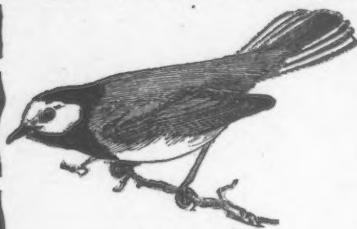
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